

toms quoted by "On Leave" and other contributors are a stressing of the negative factors, without any attention to the positive developments. The use of such loose terms as "rank and file control of the army needs to proceed at the same pace as rank and file control of industry" only indicates a lack of understanding of the situation. Firstly, there can be no real "rank and file" control of industry under capitalism, nor does the Party advocate this. We do demand Production Committees and workers' share in management to increase production, but that is all. Secondly, what is meant by "rank and file control of the Army?" In the Soviet Union, there is no such thing. Discipline is stronger there than anywhere; Red Army officers do not call meetings to determine the strategy and tactics to be followed. Nevertheless, the Red Army is immeasurably more democratic than any other.

How, then, could we expect rank and file control in a capitalist army?

The comrades who painted such a black picture of the situation in the Services apparently are either speaking from isolated experiences, or qualify before difficulties which undoubtedly do exist, but which can be overcome.

The Australian Army is the most democratic in the world, outside the Soviet Union. More, since the change in the character of the war, there has been a progressive development towards greater democracy.

If the Army Education Service were the only such development this in itself would be enough evidence to demonstrate the above statement. The open and frank discussion of political questions is not only allowed, but encouraged, by the Army Command, and an apparatus established to conduct these discussions. True, there are bad examples of sabotage of A.E.S., and it is not as efficient and widespread as it should be, but it does a great job, under difficulties. Even more important, it is there to be developed by politically conscious soldiers.

Here is an example of the value of A.E.S. in the front lines, an example which could be supported by many others. A soldier in New Guinea writes:

"It is not fierce, iron discipline that makes us carry on, but it is the traditional spirit inherited by all Australians. This is backed by the knowledge of struggle gained from the last depression. To strengthen our unbreakable spirit is our expanding political consciousness. Here we can congratulate the Army Education Service for the valuable assistance."

The recent institution of the "request hour," which allows direct approach to officers with complaints is

a further demonstration of the growth of democracy in the Army. In many cases, there are opportunities to develop welfare committees, which are not encouraged by the authorities, but which have been established by unionists in the forces, quite successfully.

Complaints about class distinction between officers and men are justified, in many cases, but these are only a reflection of class divisions in society. Even here, these divisions are often eliminated in practice, particularly in operational areas.

In the course of the People's War against fascism the democratic forces are continually asserting their influence, and it is true to state this applies to the services also. Certainly, there is room for greater democracy in the services, but unreal demands should not be made, nor should gloomy pictures be painted which neglect the real opportunities for political work in the services.

In many respects, the Army has been a ground for political education of thousands of middle class men, farmers and others, who live and fight together with industrial workers, in a war which has the greatest political significance of all wars, and this inevitably hastens their political development.

Certainly, our armed forces are not a people's army in the sense the Red Army is; nevertheless, in the People's War, the services are our People's Army, and it is our duty to strive for greater democracy and a closer approach to the desired standard. This can be done by all politically advanced workers in the services, using the many opportunities already available, as well as it can be by the Labor movement from outside. The Labor movement does owe a duty to the services, and can pay it by increasing its ties with the men and women of the services, and by demanding realisable improvements in the administration and leadership of the services.

As Communists fight for production efficiency in the factories, soldier Communists fight for morale and efficiency in the services; and as the factory Communist does not advocate the immediate expropriation of the factories, neither does the soldier Communist demand a socialist army.

Our demands are limited by the requirements of the war effort for the destruction of fascism.

(This discussion is now closed; further articles on the armed forces should not be on the character of the army, general policy, etc., but dealing with the exploits of the Army, aspects of their life, that is, of a more concrete character.—Editor, "Communist Review.")

## ART AND THE STRUGGLE

By D. DIAMOND

Certain trends evident in modern art exhibitions make J. B. Miles' appeal at the 13th Congress for Communists to write more on these matters very timely.

A good percentage of modern art expresses anything but intelligible ideas, and there is much that must be classed as experimentation, but tribute must be paid to the work of a small and conscientious section whose positive qualities are already evident in their realist approach.

But "Realism with a social content" means discoveries on a bigger and grander scale than many of these artists are achieving at present.

The changes which the world is undergoing make big demands on the artist. They trouble, but at the same time exact great things from him—the future being with the artist who is capable of taking a comprehensive viewpoint embracing a totality of social relationships.

While opposition to capitalism is apparent in the work of a number of other artists, promising to develop into a revolutionary attitude towards life, their work is too introspective and individualistic. Whatever bearing it has on social problems, the meaning is too obscure and unintelligible to all but the artist.

In a class-divided society where the individual has no realisation of his role, the artist is often caught in the trap of individuality, absorbed in his own frustration—delving into the sub-conscious and the irrational to the point where all rational thought is left behind.

The influence of Surrealism and Formalism are apparent in much of the work exhibited—influences that must be curbed if the work of an artist is to escape triviality and deal with events that matter—the death of the old world and the birth of the new.

The first of these, Surrealism, has lost much of its influence overseas, but is still influencing artists in this country. Surrealism claims to be revolutionary—purporting to add to Marxism the theories of Freud, apart from economic considerations. The free play of the sub-conscious in regard to the five senses, sexuality as a system, the involuntary cropping up of associations during the creative process, though perhaps of some scientific value, can play no part in making the people conscious of their social and revolutionary responsibilities.

In considering Surrealism it is important to bear in mind the attacks made on the Soviet Union by leading exponents of Surrealism overseas. The attacks usually take the well-known Trotskyist form of supporting the cause of Communism while attacking the U.S.S.R. This does not mean that artists influenced by Surrealism are Trotskyists.

The struggle against Trotskyism in the field of art is worth mentioning here, however, as it may be that ideas emanating from this source have been innocently enough taken up locally. Trotsky's views on proletarian culture are not so well known as his other distortions. He writes:—

"... the bourgeoisie is a rich class and hence educated. There was a bourgeois culture before the bourgeoisie finally captured power. The bourgeoisie captures power in order to entrench its domination everlastingly. The proletariat in bourgeois society is an impetuous and disinherited class and can, therefore, create no culture of its own. Only after capturing power it first realises its horrible cultural backwardness." ("Literature and Revolution").

It was no accident that Trotsky assumed leadership over the opponents of proletarian culture, a position determined by the political conviction that denied the possibility of building socialism in one country.

Trotsky considered that the function of a substitute in the period of proletarian dictatorship will be fulfilled by the art of the petit-bourgeois intelligentsia, and afterwards there will be no need for proletarian culture. The proletariat being incapable of creating its own class revolutionary culture must entrust the "creative culture tradition to the bourgeois creative intelligentsia," which will ensure cultural continuity until such time as "the kingdom of Socialism" arrives and there will be no need of any class culture.

Here we have not only a denial of proletarian culture, but of the class struggle. Obviously, proletarian culture in State forms is not possible until after the seizure of power by the working class,

but even more obviously proletarian culture is a sharp weapon in the struggle against the enemies of culture before the revolution. The artists, painters and writers who are expressing anti-fascist and progressive ideas in their work, who have a realist approach to life in all its forms, are playing an important part in the development of a People's Movement in Australia.

By rejecting proletarian culture, Trotsky at the same time encouraged the further development of bourgeois culture and ideology under socialism! The anti-Marxist, counter-revolutionary position of Trotsky on questions of culture is evident in the light of the following:—

"... the methods of Marxism are not the methods of art." (Literature and Revolution, p. 161).

Lenin, in opposition to Trotsky, took the viewpoint of a revolutionary proletarian socialist culture. Here is what he writes:—"Marxism has conquered for itself its all-world historical significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat by the fact that it, Marxism, has not at all cast aside the most valuable conquests of the bourgeois era but, on the contrary, by mastering and working over everything that was valuable in the more than 2,000 years of development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction, inspired by the practical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the last struggle against all kinds of exploitation, can be recognised as the development of a really proletarian culture. The entire experience of latter day history and especially the more than half a century of revolutionary struggle of the proletariat of all countries of the world since the appearance of the Communist Manifesto have proved beyond peradventure of doubt that only the world philosophy of Marxism is the correct expression of the interests, the viewpoint and the culture of the proletariat."

In the same way that Leninism is the continuation of Marxism, so the Leninist view of art is the further development of Marx and Engels' views on that subject.

Formalism, the other tendency referred to above, was characterised by Lenin as the main right danger on all art fronts.

Insisting on simplicity in art, on its accessibility to the broadest masses, Lenin and the Party fought against formalism which was leading art along the path of virtuosity. In the first years of the revolution, in his conversations with students, Lenin spoke against the spreading of a formalist viewpoint, in painting, sculpture and literature. Lenin demanded realism in art and more than once stood out against the petit-bourgeois, idealistic aesthetic tendencies among which formalism occupied the leading role. Later formalism went over to active opposition, and open warfare against Marxism.

To all these tendencies in question of art, the Party has posed the Leninist slogan of art as a weapon of socialist education, of art joined to the masses, of art as a means of understanding and remaking the world. The revolution in Russia brought into aesthetic life the great masses of the people. New people filled the theatres and art galleries,

and will of the masses and uplift them," is confirmed by twenty-six years of Soviet life. It is because Lenin's words have been fully realised, because there is no separation of art and culture from the people, that we find socialist artists playing such an important role in the struggle against the Nazi invaders.

(With acknowledgments to A. Stork.)

new readers demanded literature, making new demands on art and literature, bringing art generally the demand that it be placed at the service of the people.

The truth of Lenin's statement that "art belongs to the people. It must with its widest stretching roots go out into the very thick of the broadest masses. It must combine the feelings, thoughts